

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 EB-08 TRSE-00

OMB-01 AID-05 ACDA-12 /099 W

-----069365 101319Z /45

O R 101130Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1774

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

US MISSION USUN NEW YORK 278

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LILONGWE 0519

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, RH, MI

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BANDA

1. SUMMARY: BANDA IS OBVIOUSLY LOOKING FORWARD TO HIS PRIVATE VISIT TO THE U.S. WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION. ON PREVIOUS VISITS HE MET PRESIDENTS KENNEDY AND JOHNSON AND HOPES HE MAY MEET PRESIDENT CARTER. HE ADMITTED THAT HE HAD NEVER BELIEVED HE WOULD SEE THE DAY AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT WOULD VISIT A BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRY. REGARDING SITHOLE AND THE GOVERNING COUNCIL IN SALISBURY, HE WAS GUARDEDLY OPTIMISTIC BUT CLEARLY AWARE THAT SITHOLE MAY BE GIVING HIM A SNOW JOB. HE
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SAID SITHOLE HAD NOT DISCUSSED WITH HIM THE FORTHCOMING MEETINGS ON THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS AND WAS RELUCTANT TO GIVE HIS OPINION WHETHER OR NOT SITHOLE WOULD ATTEND AN ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE NOTING ONLY THAT HE WOULD NOT ATTEND ALONE AND DOUBTFUL SMITH AND MUZOREWA COULD BE PERSUADED TO ATTEND. HE SAID HE HAD URGED SITHOLE TO WRITE A PERSONAL LETTER TO NKOMO ASKING HIM TO COME HOME

AND, ALSO, TO GET SMITH TO AGREE TO LIFT THE DETENTION ORDER AGAINST NKOMO. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT BANDA RECEIVED ME SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 8, AT HIS PRIVATE HOME IN LILONGWE. HE WAS IN A JOVIAL MOOD AND IS OBVIOUSLY LOOKING FORWARD TO HIS VISIT TO THE U.S. WITH GREAT PLEASURE. HE OPENED THE CONVERSATION WITH EXPRESSION OF REGRET THAT I WOULD BE LEAVING AND SEEMED PLEASED WHEN I TOLD HIM THAT MY DEPARTURE HAD BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL AFTER HIS RETURN FROM THE STATES.

3. ONCE AGAIN, AS IN OUR LAST CONVERSATION, HE REFERRED TO HIS TWO MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT KENNEDY AND HE OBSERVED THAT HE HAD ENCOURAGED PRESIDENT KENNEDY IN HIS IDEA OF THE PEACE CORPS AND THAT MALAWI HAD RECEIVED ONE OF THE VERY FIRST CONTINGENTS OF VOLUNTEERS. HE MENTIONED HIS VISIT WITH PRESIDENT JOHNSON AND REMARKED THAT HE HAS NEVER MET PRESIDENT CARTER BUT HOPES VERY MUCH THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO. OF COURSE, HE SAID, I CAN UNDERSTAND THE DEMANDS ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S TIME. I REMARKED THAT HIS SCHEDULE IS INDEED VERY FULL BUT THAT I HAD STRONGLY RECOMMENDED AN APPOINTMENT IF IT IS AT ALL POSSIBLE.

4. BANDA ASKED ME WHY PRESIDENT CARTER HAD CHOSEN TO VISIT NIGERIA AND I REFERRED TO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC

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AND POLITICAL IMPORTANCE ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT, AND, ALSO, THE DESIRE OF THIS ADMINISTRATION TO BRING THE AFRICAN POLICIES OF THE U.S. INTO A SHARPER AND MORE MEANINGFUL FOCUS; THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN AFRICA AND ITS PROBLEMS AND WANTS TO DEVELOP A CLOSER AND MORE USEFUL RELATIONSHIP THAN WE HAVE HAD IN THE PAST. BANDA NODDED HIS AGREEMENT AND REMARKED THAT HE WOULD NEVER HAVE BELIEVED THAT A PRESIDENT OF THE U.S. WOULD HAVE TAKEN THE TIME AND TROUBLE TO VISIT A BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRY; THAT HE APPRECIATED VERY MUCH THE FACT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD DONE SO AND THAT HE UNDERSTANDS WHY NIGERIA HAD BEEN CHOSEN. HE THEN LAUNCHED INTO ONE OF HIS TYPICAL HISTORICAL VIGNETTES IN WHICH HE DESCRIBED HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE FIRST NIGERIAN PRIME MINISTER AZIKIWE WHILE BANDA WAS A MEDICAL DOCTOR IN LONDON. HE DESCRIBED HIS TUTELAGE AND HELP TO KWAME NKRUMAH OF GHANA OBSERVING THAT BOTH HAD BEEN BROUGHT DOWN BY MILITARY COUPS WHICH HAVE LEFT BOTH COUNTRIES IN A POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MESS. HE REMARKED THAT THE GENERALS LEADING THESE COUNTRIES ARE NOT EDUCATED MEN LIKE "GEN. EISENHOWER" AND "GEN. DEGAULLE" BUT ARE "BUSH SOLDIERS" WITH LITTLE EDUCATION AND LACKING IN THE ABILITY TO RUN

A MODERN ECONOMY.

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-----069439 101319Z /45

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LILONGWE 0519

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

5. BANDA ENJOYS REMINISCING ABOUT THE OLD DAYS AND IT
WAS WITH SOME DIFFICULTY THAT I TURNED HIM TO THE SUBJECT
OF RHODESIA AND SITHOLE'S ESTIMATE OF HOW THE INTERNAL
AGREEMENT IS WORKING. BANDA, WITH HIS TYPICAL SHREWDNESS
IN THESE MATTERS, OBSERVED THAT ANYTHING SITHOLE SAYS
MUST BE CONSIDERED WITH THE THOUGHT IN MIND THAT HE IS
GOING TO TELL HIS LISTENERS, AT LEAST TO SOME EXTENT, WHAT
HE WANTS THE SITUATION TO BE AND NOT NECESSARILY WHAT IT
REALLY IS. MAKING ALLOWANCES FOR THIS, BANDA SAID SITHOLE
SEEMED EXTREMELY CONFIDENT THAT THE GOVERNING COUNCIL IS
GOING TO WORK; THAT THE GUERRILLAS WILL INCREASINGLY LAY
DOWN THEIR ARMS AND RETURN HOME AND THAT SMITH IS ONLY
TRYING TO INSURE THAT A GOVERNMENT WILL BE INSTALLED
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WHICH WILL PERMIT HIM TO GO TO HIS FARM AND RETIRE FROM PUBLIC LIFE ("HE HAS NO OTHER COUNTRY TO WHICH TO GO"). HE SAID SITHOLE HAD TOLD HIM THAT HE IS NOT ONLY IN CONTACT WITH GUERRILLAS FROM HIS OLD ANC MOVEMENT, BUT ALSO THAT SEVERAL NKOMO GUERRILLAS HAVE MADE CONTACT WITH HIM URGING HIM TO GET ON WITH THE BUSINESS OF BRINGING ABOUT A CEASE-FIRE AND CONDITIONS WHICH WILL PERMIT THEM TO COME HOME. BANDA SAID HE HAD URGED SITHOLE TO WRITE A PERSONAL LETTER TO NKOMO TO URGE HIM TO RETURN TO RHODESIA IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT CAMPAIGN AND PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS FOR A BLACK MAJORITY GOVERNMENT. BANDA SAID DESPITE HIS OWN MISTRUST OF NKOMO (WHICH GOES ALL THE WAY BACK TO 1952 WHEN NKOMO RENEGED ON AN AGREEMENT HE HAD MADE WITH BANDA AND KAUNDA'S PREDECESSOR NKUMBULA, NOT TO RECOGNIZE THE FEDERATION), HE SAID HE STRESSED TO SITHOLE THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING NKOMO BACK IN ORDER THAT HIS NDABELE SUPPORT WOULD NOT FEEL FRUSTRATED AND UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION PROCESS.

6. I REVIEWED FOR PRES. BANDA THE PRESENT COURSE OF OUR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS UNDER THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS AND ASKED HIM IF HE THOUGHT REV. SITHOLE WOULD BE LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE WHICH WILL FOLLOW THE MEETING IN DAR ES SALAAM. BANDA SAID SITHOLE HAD MADE NO REFERENCE TO EITHER MEETING IN THEIR CONVERSATION (APRIL 1) BUT THAT HE DOUBTS VERY MUCH SITHOLE WOULD ATTEND ALONE, AND THAT SMITH AND MUZOREWA CAN BE PERSUADED TO PARTICIPATE. "CHIRAU DOESN'T COUNT FOR ANYTHING", HE SAID. AS ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, HE INDICATED HIS BELIEF THAT SITHOLE IS THE ONLY REAL BLACK POLITICAL LEADER OF THE THREE RHODESIAN MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL; THAT SITHOLE HAS BEEN CAMPAIGNING HARD IN ALL PARTS OF ZIMBABWE AND HAS, IN BANDA'S OPINION, PICKED UP A GREAT DEAL OF INTERNAL

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SUPPORT IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS. HE OBSERVED THAT HE WAS THE ONE WHO PERSUADED SMITH TO LIFT THE ARREST ORDER SO AS PERMIT SITHOLE TO RETURN AND THAT HE HAS BEEN URGING SITHOLE TO GET SMITH TO DO THE SAME THING FOR NKOMO AND, AS WELL, FOR ANY OF THE GUERRILLAS FROM ANY OF THE FACTIONS IF THEY WOULD LIKE TO LAY DOWN THEIR ARMS AND COME HOME.

7. KNOWING THAT THERE WERE THREE MINISTERS WAITING BEHIND ME TO SEE BANDA, I DID NOT TRY TO DRAW HIM OUT FURTHER EXCEPT TO TURN TO OUR LOCAL PROBLEM OF GETTING CLEARANCES FOR MALAWIANS TRAINED UNDER THE BUNDA PROGRAM SO THAT THEY CAN RETURN TO WORK AS SOON AS THEY GET BACK TO THE COUNTRY.

HE WAS CLEARLY QUITE UNAWARE OF THE EXTENT OF THE DELAY IN THIS PROCESS AND AFTER I HAD REVIEWED THE SITUATION FOR HIM, HE SAID HE WOULD ASK THE UNIVERSITY AND THE SECURITY PEOPLE TO SET UP A SYSTEM WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE RETURNEES TO GO INTO THEIR JOBS IMMEDIATELY SUBJECT TO A POST-CHECK AS TO THEIR BEHAVIOR WHILE THEY WERE ABROAD. ALTHOUGH HE MAY HAVE BEEN THINKING ALONG POLITICAL LINES, HE REFERRED TO "A NORMAL POLICE CHECK AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THEY HAVE DONE ANYTHING WRONG WHILE THEY WERE LIVING IN YOUR COUNTRY". I HAVE BEEN STRUGGLING WITH OFFICIALDOM ON THIS POINT FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND, ONCE AGAIN, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE ONLY PERSON HERE WHO MAKES DECISIONS ON MATTERS OF THIS KIND IS BANDA AND OFTEN HE IS NOT INFORMED BY HIS SUBORDINATES IN THE WAY THAT HE SHOULD BE.

8. IN CLOSING, BANDA SAID HE WOULD LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING ME ON HIS DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNTRY AND ONCE AGAIN UPON HIS RETURN. I ASKED HIM IF HE HAD HAD TIME TO READ "ROOTS", NOTING THAT SOMEONE WILL SURELY ASK HIM THIS QUESTION IN THE U.S. HE LAUGHED AND SAID HE HAD AND HAD FOUND IT "INTERESTING" BUT "OF COURSE, IT IS WRITTEN FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE AMERICA NEGRO, NOT THE AFRICAN."

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STEVENSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LILONG00519
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780153-1106
Format: TEL
From: LILONGWE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780475/aaaacplpg.tel
Line Count: 254
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fb92aab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3022477
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BANDA
TAGS: PDEV, RH, MI, (BANDA, H KAMUZU)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fb92aab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014